Industrial status to agriculture sector

1614. SHRI AJAY SINGH CHAUTALA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to give industrial status to the agriculture sector so that it could develop in its full dimension;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) by what time it is likely to be done;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the scheme of Government to boost production in the agriculture sector in 2004-05 and 2005-06?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (d) The Government seeks to bestow on the agriculture sector as many benefits as possible similar to those obtaining in the manufacturing sector, such as easy availability of credit and other inputs and infrastructure facilities for development of agriculture sector including marketing and post harvest management.

(e) To enhance agriculture production and productivity, the Government is running in different States and UTs many important programmes and schemes such as Technology Mission on Cotton, Technology Mission on Coconut, Technology Mission on Horticulture in North East States including Sikkim, Uttaranchal, and Jammu & Kashmir, On-Farm Water Management in Eastern India, integrated scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize and Macro Management which covers production programmes for cereals, sugarcane, jute, horticulture products, watershed development, soil and water conservation and schemes for cooperatives.

Expensive treatment and medicine

†1615. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
DR. MURU MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that with treatment getting increasingly expensive in the country, common man has to spend 82.2 per cent of his pocket money on medicine and treatment;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if not, what is Government's assessment and whether it is also **a** fact that in rich countries like America and England these expenses are 15.3 per cent and 10.6 per cent respectively; and

(c) if not, what is Government's response in this regard and what steps are being taken by Government to make medicine and treatment cheaper?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (c) The Drug Policies, as announced from time to time, are directed towards ensuring abundant availability of quality drugs at reasonable prices. The 74 bulk drugs specified in the First Schedule of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 (DPCO, 95) and the formulation based thereon are under price control. Prices of non-Scheduled formulations are fixed by the manufacturers themselves, however, the Government takes corrective measures where the public interest is found to be adversely affected.

This Ministry has made no study on the cost of treatment.

Uniform policy on pricing and availability of drugs

1616. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to formulate a uniform policy at the national level on the pricing and availability of drugs to do away with discrepancies in prices of medicines and prevent sale of spurious drugs;

(b) whether the disparities in prices is benefiting the middlemen and affecting the poor patients; and

(c) the early steps proposed to check the exploitation of patients by the druggists taking advantage of variance in prices?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (c) The Drug Policies, as announced from time to time, are directed towards ensuring abundant availability of quality drugs at reasonable prices. The quality of drugs is ensured through the provisions of Drugs and Cosmetic Act, 1940 and rules framed thereunder.

The 74 bulk drugs specified in the First Schedule of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 (DPCO, 95) and the formulations based thereon are